

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5410

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 15814

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: MARR, IN

SUBJECT: INDIAN CONCERNS ABOUT MIDLINK

SUMMARY: IN THE ABSENCE OF THE AMBASSADOR, WHO IS TRAVELLING IN CENTRAL INDIA, ACTING FOREIGN SECRETARY TRIVEDI CALLED IN THE DCM TO EXPRESS INDIAN VIEWS ON MIDLINK 74. HE SAID THAT INDIAN CONCERN WAS TWOFOLD: FIRST WAS THE EXPRESSED RECENTLY IN PARLIAMENT AND SHARED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN REGARD TO NAVAL FORCES AND BASES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN GENERALLY; SECOND AND MORE IMPORTANT WAS THE INDIAN CONCERN REGARDING THE EFFECT OF MIDLINK ON NORMALIZATION IN THE SUBCONTINENT. END SUMMARY.

1. TRIVEDI SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO RAISE MIDLINK WITH THE AMBASSADOR. HE SPOKE OF THE GREAT CONCERN AMONG MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, A CONCERN "TO SOME EXTENT" SHARED BY THE GOVERNMENT, ABOUT THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE CURRENT EXERCISE OFF KARACHI. HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS THE LARGEST MIDLINK EXERCISE HELD THUS FAR AND THAT PREVIOUS EXERCISES HAD NOT BEEN HELD IN THIS AREA. HE SAID THAT THE US WAS WELL AWARE OF THE GOI'S THINKING ABOUT THE INDIAN OCEAN
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AND FOREIGN BASES. BUT IN THIS CASE THE GOI WAS MORE

CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF MIDLINK ON NORMALIZATION BETWEEN INDIAN AND PAKISTAN. THE GOI WAS MENTIONING THIS IN A FRIENDLY MANNER TO A FRIENDLY COUNTRY BECAUSE THE AIM OF BOTH INDIAN AND THE US WAS TO PROMOTE NORMALIZATION. THE US HAD PUBLICLY AFFIRMED THIS DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT. IT UNDOUBTEDLY DID NOT CONSIDER THAT MIDLINK WOULD HAVE ANY IMPACT ON NORMALIZATION BUT THE REPERCUSSIONS IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN WERE LIKELY TO BE CONSIDERABLY DIFFERENT FROM THE US EXPECTATIONS. TRIVEDI MENTIONED INDIA'S DESIRE TO ENCOURAGE DEMOCRACY IN PAKISTAN, AN OBJECTIVE WHICH HE BELIEVED THE US SHARED. HE NOTED THAT THE MILITARY WAS STILL STRONG THERE AND IMPLIED THAT THE GOI BELIEVED THAT MIDLINK WOULD STRENGTHEN THE POSITION OF THE PAKISTAN MILITARY.

2. THE DCM REVIEWED BRIEFLY INFORMATION REGARDING MIDLINK WHICH THE DEPARTMENT HAD PREVIOUSLY PROVIDED THE INDIAN EMBASSY, NOTING THAT IT WAS AN ANNUAL EXERCISE IN WHICH OTHER REGIONAL POWERS ALSO PARTICIPATED. HE EXPLAINED THAT HE COULD SEE NO POINT IN REVIEWING THE US ATTITUDE TOWARD NORMALIZATION ON THE SUBCONTINENT AS THIS HAD BEEN SET FORTH ELOQUENTLY AND THOROUGHLY BY THE SECRETARY DURING HIS VISIT. HE WOULD REPORT TRIVEDI'S PRESENTATION TO WASHINGTON.

COMMENT: AS TRIVEDI SAID, IT IS TRUE THAT THE GOI HAS BEEN UNDER STRONG PRESSURE FROM MP'S TO DESCRIBE WHAT PROTESTS IT HAS LODGED OVER THE MIDLINK EXERCISE. THE BRITISH WERE ALSO CALLED IN TODAY ON THIS SUBJECT, WE DO NOT KNOW AS YET WHETHER THE TURKS AND IRANIANS WERE EQUALLY HONORED. END COMMENT.
MOYNIHAN

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